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ABSTRACT

A total of 30 women from a large eastern state who were identified as being single heads of households and who were receiving some form of public assistance, raising one or more children under the age of 18 years, and either currently or previously employed were interviewed regarding their demographics, work experiences, and past and present life circumstances. The women were selected to yield a sample with a two-thirds rural and one-third urban composition. The interview findings were analyzed to identify the following: links between single motherhood and poverty; circumstances leading to poverty; problems of simultaneously being a mother and provider; problems of raising children while living in poverty; the problems of gender discrimination in employment status; the role of social support in emerging from poverty and into lives with opportunities for self and children; and past/present dreams of women who formerly/currently work and live in poverty. A recommended action framework for moving women out of poverty included income opportunities, a social support and linking system, and community help and healing. (Appended are background sketches of the women interviewed and descriptions of the sample selection, interview design/administration, and data analysis processes. Contains 94 references.) (MN)

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